

11M-6-4
95A.

10 May 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Vital Records

1. On 9 May 1960, I dischssed with Mr. Lewis Dater, National Archives and Records Service, certain matters pertaining to government-wide vital records.

2. Here are the principal items discussed:

a. GSA has a vital records depository suitable for the storage and protection of sensitive government records and materials. This facility is located near Neosho, Mo., in the Ozark Mountains.

b. The Vital Records Depository has humidity and temperature controls suitable for the storage of records.

c. The facility is in a limestone mine completely underground with protection from 40-100 feet.

d. This facility is now used by a number of government agencies for vital records deposit.

e. The Department of the Navy considers that the Depository meets their standards for safe guarding TOP SECRET documents.

f. The Depository is equipped with steel shelving and most agencies now store their material in packages or boxes on the shelving.

g. Each area within the Depository is secured with expanded metal.

h. Adequate security measures have been provided, such as ADT Alarm, automatic sprinkler system and hourly guard inspection 24 hours a day.

i. The depository is accessible to rail, motor and air transportation.

j. Ample space is available and it can be obtained from GSA without rental cost.

3. I discussed with Mr. Darter also his viewpoint with respect to vital records programs operated by industry and other governmental programs. He indicated that the Ford Motor Company, for instance, has changed its policy substantially in the last two years. They are unable to sell the OCDM type program to the key officials. They have, however, successfully established a program which is geared to protection of records from natural disaster rather than from an emergency situation. This apparently works much better.

4. Mr. Darter also indicated that most State Governments are now responding to suggestions of OCDM to establish a State Records Management Program. These programs will include vital records.

5. About a year ago, a representative from the Canadian Government visited GSA to discuss the Federal Government Vital Records Program with the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Grover, and certain OCDM officials. Mr. Darter felt that the Canadian Government has not progressed in the vital records field to the extent that we have.

5. Mr. Darter observed that most government agencies do not have an active vital records program. It is difficult to instill interest in a program which is geared to an emergency which everyone hopes will never occur. He observed that the Military disperses its vital records in a number of their field installations rather than concentrate them in a central depository.



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CC: To Mr.

